

AN APPEAL

TO THE

CITIZENS OF NEW-YORK,

IN BEHALF OF

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

By GARDINER SPRING,
PASTOR OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

NEW-YORK :

PRINTED BY J. SEYMOUR, 49 JOHN-STREET.

1823.

Ex Libris

SEYMOUR DURST

t' Fort nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans



FORT NEW AMSTERDAM



(NEW YORK), 1651

When you leave, please leave this book
Because it has been said
"Ever'thing comes t' him who waits
Except a loaned book."

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY

AN APPEAL.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE demand has more than once been made—What right have the ministers of the gospel to interfere with the moral conduct of the community? For myself, I have ever supposed, that if there is an order of men who sustain the weighty responsibility of guardians of the public morals, they are the ministry of reconciliation. It would be weak indeed in them, to think of aspiring to the exercise of *authority*; but to that influence which one man exerts over another, by considerations addressed to his understanding, his moral sense, and his own best good, a privilege which the institutions of a free country have guaranteed to every free man, it is their high and honest exultation, humbly and devoutly to aspire. It is in the exercise of no other than this common privilege, that the writer ventures to make an appeal to the citizens of New-York, in behalf of the Christian Sabbath.

To assign to the Sabbath that place we could wish to see it hold in the creed and habits of every well-wisher to the community, we must be allowed to claim for it an early and high-born origin. In presenting an outline of the argument in favour of the divine institution and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, we urge the necessity which ever has existed, and the consequent reasonableness, of some well defined period for the public worship of God. It is a dictate of reason that if there is a God he ought to be worshipped. If he ought to be worshipped, it is reasonable to suppose he should be worshipped in the best way. Man is

the creature of society. His social as well as his moral nature gives birth to obligations which must influence his religious character. If the social principle is one which is consulted in giving interest and importance to secular concerns, why may it not be tributary to that mightiest concern, the worship of God? But, if it is the duty of men to unite in acts of social and public worship, there exists a necessity for some well-defined and fixed season for the performance of this duty. Without such an appointment, not only would the beauty of the service be defaced, and its order and harmony interrupted, but its design defeated, and the service itself in a great measure neglected. If there is any weight to be attached to these remarks, we may conclude that the observance of some appointed period for the worship of God is perpetually binding; because the reasons of this observance exist and operate in all places, and in every age of the world, and equally concern all mankind.

We also urge the general agreement of the nations in setting apart every seventh day for this particular service. Ever since the creation of the world, the great mass of mankind have united in the observance of every seventh day, as a day of religious worship.* There is something worthy of observation in the sacredness of the *septenary number*, and in the circumstance that all nations unite in the division of time into weeks. This division of time is not a natural one, but is altogether arbitrary. The division into day and night, into months and years, is marked by the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth round the sun, and the moon round the earth. But there is nothing in the solar system to mark the division of time into weeks, unless it be the di-

* For the proof of this remark, see *Bedford's Chronology*—*De Goguet, Origin of Laws*, vol. i. p. 250—*Grotius, de Veritate Christ. Relig. Lib. i.*—*Rollin—Jennings's Jewish Antiquities*—together with an able discussion, entitled “*The Doctrine of the Church of England concerning the Lord's Day*,” by *J. Smith*. Consult also, *Encyclopædia*, art. *Sab. and Week*.

vision of the month into quarters, a division which was subsequent to the division into weeks, and to which this latter division does not owe its origin. The learned Grotius, and not without reference to the best authorities, affirms, "that the memory of the creation's being performed within seven days, was preserved, not only among the Greeks and Italians, but among the Celts and Indians, all of whom divided their time into weeks." To confirm this idea, we may remark, that the word the ancients made use of to denote *a week*, is *Sabbath*, a word which denotes *rest*, or a day of rest.* This division of time into weeks no doubt had its origin in the existence of a day of rest, which either by the common consent of mankind, or by superhuman appointment, recurred every seventh day, and constituted the limit of every week. It is therefore a fact of some importance, that most if not all the pagan nations, far remote from each other in time and place, and antipodes in religion, and many of whom cannot be supposed to have had any acquaintance with the law of Moses, and who, if they had, would never have stooped to borrow a religious institution from that neglected and persecuted people, actually observed every seventh day as a day of religious worship. Now, if the observance of some particular season for rest and devotion is primarily a law of nature; if it is ascertained, that by the general consent of nations every seventh day is set apart for this service; this circumstance of itself furnishes strong presumptive testimony that the consecration of every seventh day was the object of divine appointment, and the celebration of it the matter of a traditionary revelation from the family of Noah. In addition to this,

The formal designation of this day as a day of rest by God himself, immediately after the creation, is a consideration of some force in this investigation. We

* Vide *Marsh's Michaelis*.

have the origin of this institution in the following narrative of the Sacred Historian : " Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God ended the work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had created and made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because on it he had rested from all his work." Here God put distinguished honour on the seventh day, as the birth-day of this great creation. He "blessed" and "sanctified" it as the day of mercy and holiness to man. When this institution was first established, the Hebrew State was not in existence; nor did it take its rise until twenty-five hundred years after this period: so that it was not, as has been asserted, a mere Mosaic rite, but an institution of earlier date, committed to our first parents, as the representatives of their whole posterity, and unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, extending its binding force, not only through the Patriarchal and Jewish, but Christian dispensations. In conformity with this primeval institution of the Sabbath, we find that the first intimation of it which is given to the Israelites, recognises it as an institution of previous appointment. The first recorded intimation we have of it after the patriarchal age, is given to the Israelites as they commenced their march through the wilderness. No sooner had they penetrated the desert, and began to murmur for want of food, than God said to them, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day. And it shall come to pass on the *sixth day*, they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. This is that which the *Lord hath said*, To-morrow is the *holy Sabbath* unto the Lord." And when on the following Sabbath, they disregarded the claims of this sacred day, and went out on the morning to gather manna, God severely reprobated their conduct. "*How long* refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? Abide ye every

man in his place, let no man go out of his place the seventh day." May we not conclude from language like this, that the Sabbath is an institution not then for the first time established, but of prior and acknowledged existence?

We urge too, and we think irresistibly, the introduction of a precept, requiring the observance of this day, into the moral law. The distinction between the ceremonial and moral law, consists in this: the ceremonial law directed the peculiar policy and worship of the Jewish nation—it prescribed the rites and ceremonies under the Mosaic dispensation exclusively—such as the offering of sacrifices, the worship of the temple, the celebration of the passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feasts of Purim and Dedication. The moral law is that declaration of the will of God, which directs and binds all men, in every age and place, to their whole duty to him. It is comprised in what are usually called the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial law was temporary, and is repealed; the moral is permanent, and unrepealable. The former was superseded and abolished, at the introduction of the Christian dispensation; the latter endures for ever. The moral law is the code which our Lord affirms he "came not to destroy, but to fulfil," and of which he so solemnly declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail." And yet, in this grand moral code, you find the precept, "REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY." There is no solemnity, obligation, or permanency, here imparted to the first, the second, the third precept, or either of the ten, which does not belong equally to the fourth. You may as well deny the perpetual obligation of the whole, as that which insists on the observance of the Sabbath day.

Nor should we lose sight of the prediction, that the enjoyment of the Sabbath shall be one of the distinguished blessings of the Church of God under the evangelical economy, nor of the unequivocal recognition of the existence

and obligations of this day, after the Jewish dispensation had come to its close. In relation to the universal benefits of this day, our Lord asserts, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Now, if this day was instituted for men generally, is it not reasonable to suppose that the blessings of it were designed to be perpetual? The same blessed Personage also expressly recognised the existence and obligation of the Sabbath, long after his resurrection. Looking forward to the final destruction of Jerusalem, a period of forty years after the abolition of the Jewish economy, he says to his disciples, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day." In his contemplations, the Sabbath certainly existed subsequent to the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, also, the Apostle of the Gentiles, having spoken of the change of the Jewish to the Christian Sabbath, remarks, "There *remaineth* therefore a Sabbath to the people of God."

Nor is the force of these considerations at all diminished by the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. The import of the law enforcing the observance of the sabbatical institution, appears to me to be, that *every seventh day* shall be a day of rest. Whether it be the first or last day of the week, I cannot consider essential to the institution. Under the Mosaic dispensation it was the last; under the Christian dispensation it is the first. There is no want of testimony in favour of the change. We learn from the New Testament that the first day of the week was observed in commemoration of our blessed Lord's resurrection—that it was the day of administering the Lord's supper—that it was called the "Lord's day," in distinction from all other days—that it was the day of public worship for the apostolic church—that it was the day of the wonderful outpouring of the Spirit of God—that it was the day of our Lord's appearing to his disciples—that the observance of this day was the great badge of Christianity in the first

centuries of the Christian era ; and from the history of the Church, that it has been the day which the God of heaven has hallowed and blessed to men in every subsequent age of the world. The objections to the divine institution and permanent obligation of the Lord's day are comparatively frivolous. The Great Legislator has given infinite force to the precept, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

But it is not my design in this Appeal, to exhibit to any considerable extent, the divine authority and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath. There is a point of view in which it may perhaps commend itself to the consciences of men who question its divine authority.

The peculiar and appropriate employment of this day consists in the public worship of God, and the duties of domestic and personal piety, to the exclusion of idleness and sloth, of secular business, and of pleasure and amusement. It may be there are advantages attendant on the observance of this institution, which will give it a place in the affections of every man who identifies himself with the high interests of human society. I have often thought that some men disregarded the claims of this day with a spirit that calls in question scarcely any thing more than their patriotism ; and who, if they were aware of the invariable tendencies of its observance, would rejoice in its appointment, and greet its return with an enthusiasm like that with which they hail the birth-day of their country's freedom.

Is it too much to affirm, that THE SABBATICAL INSTITUTION IS PRE-EMINENTLY THE MEANS OF INTELLECTUAL ADVANCEMENT ? In the performance of the appropriate duties of the Sabbath, every person either becomes a teacher or a learner, and derives his instructions from the best and most important sources. He either reads or hears the Holy Scriptures ; he listens to the instructions and counsels of wisdom from the house of God ; he occupies a place in the school of Christ, either at home or abroad, and that with the pro-

fessed object of becoming acquainted with subjects which interest his mind, elicit thought and inquiry, and produce that discipline of the understanding, and capacity for intellectual effort, which are the proximate design of all education.

Ignorance and barbarism form no part of the character of men who revere the Lord's day. It is impossible to condemn to meanness and obscurity the individual, or the community, who rejoice in the light of the Christian Sabbath. Carry the privileges of this day to the most abject on the face of this globe, and just in the proportion in which they are subjected to its influence, do you elevate them from their intellectual degradation. The reason for this is obvious. There is no small portion of mankind, whose only opportunity of information is derived from the Sabbath. And it is no contemptible opportunity. With the exception of a few years of infancy, and, perhaps, sickness, it consists of one day in seven, and ordinarily of one-seventh part of an entire life. The child who lives but seven years, is furnished, from this day alone, with one entire year of important instruction; the youth who dies at the age of fourteen, is furnished with two years; the man of twenty-one, with three years; the man of forty-two, with six years; the man of eighty, with nearly twelve entire years of uninterrupted learning. You may suppose an individual, a family, or community, either so faulty or so unfortunate as to be deprived of all instruction, except on the Sabbath; but if the instructions of the Sabbath are improved, it is impossible they should be ignorant. One-seventh part of human life, even with persons thus abject, is devoted to the attainment of knowledge. The Sabbath, in this particular, affects *the great mass of mankind*. It addresses its obligations, and presents its privileges to all orders and classes of men, the low, as well as the high, the poor as well as the rich. Conceive, then, the great mass of the community devoting one day in seven to the attainment of knowledge; one day in seven searching the holy scriptures; assembling in the

house of God to hear the instructions of his ministers: and then appreciate the importance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath also furnishes the world with instruction in the tenderest and most docile age. That great precept in the decalogue which enforces the observance of this day, has a particular direction for masters and heads of families. It contemplates the assiduous and indefatigable instruction of the rising generation, and through those domestic instrumentalities which are invested with powerful persuasion, and usually attended with happy success. To what a multitude of children does the Sabbath present the best time, the best opportunity, and the best motives for the attainment of instruction. And with what inconceivable force may we make this appeal when we advert to that blessed expedient of the age in which we live, the establishment of Sunday Schools! Scarcely do our children come into existence, than they are encircled by the light of Sabbaths. From their early years they look toward the Sabbath and the sanctuary as the appointed means of instruction. They grow up under the cheering influence of this day of knowledge; and whether they become improved or degraded in a spiritual view, intellectually, and that through the whole course of their existence, they are under obligations to the Sabbath. There is something too in the kind of instruction which the Sabbath communicates, which has a happy influence on the human mind. It relates to themes on which are staked our dearest interests for this world and the world to come. It calls the soul away from the bustle of this vain world to contemplate the wonderful works of God in creation, providence, and redemption. It casts a veil over what is seen, and uncovers to the eye of the mind what is unseen. It throws back into oblivion the lying vanities of time, sense, and creatures, and brings forward the solid and permanent realities of eternity, faith, and the Creator, every where disclosing facts, principles, and results, which arrest the wandering intellect, and are fitted to ex-

pand and exalt it for ever. It is the incessant occupancy of the mind by objects of sense and the pursuits of this world, that unfits it for sober thought and the attainment of useful knowledge. Exclusive immersion in the perplexities and cupidity of business debases the intellectual nature of men ; and it is only by being conversant with objects and truths of a more exalted kind, that the soul projects her noblest achievements, and makes her most rapid progression. I am persuaded more is accomplished, directly or indirectly, by the various institutions of the Sabbath, to enlighten the human mind, than is accomplished in any other way. As the means of mere intellectual advancement, I would not exchange the Sabbath for all other means of instruction. The Sabbath is the great day of light to this benighted world. The earth would scarcely be darker without the sun, than the intellectual hemisphere without the Sabbath.

There is another thought not unworthy of our notice : the Sabbath LIES AT THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SOUND MORALITY. Morality is a matter of principle. " Out of the heart are the issues of life." Let the principles of moral obligation once become universally relaxed, and the practice of morality will become loose and unhinged in the same proportion. A man cannot preserve his own morals—a parent cannot preserve the morals of his children, after he has taken away the sanctions, and erased the impressions of religious obligation. Take away these sanctions, and you will soon see how much his own and the morals of his family owe to the sacredness of good principles. It is impossible that a wholesome morality should be maintained in any community without an active impression of religious obligation. If you can persuade a community to reject the grand principles of moral obligation ; if you can lead them to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures—to question the reality and obligation of natural religion—to hesitate whether there be any such thing as virtue or vice, or whether the soul will have any future exist-

ence, and if it has, whether there be an eternal state of rewards and punishments—or whether there exists any such Being as God ; if you can bring a community to this direful point of skepticism or infidelity ; you are sure to have broken down the barriers of moral virtue, and to have hoisted the floodgates of immorality and crime. There is one institution, fellow-citizens, which opposes itself to this progress of human degeneracy, and throws an impenetrable shield around the interests of moral virtue in our troubled world. It is the Sabbath. In the awful struggle between virtue and vice, notwithstanding the powerful auxiliaries which the cause of iniquity finds in the bosoms of men, in the force of self-indulgence, and the influence of popular example, wherever the Sabbath has been suffered to live and exert her benignant authority, the trembling interests of moral virtue have always been revered and supported. The great business of this day is to explain, demonstrate, and enforce the leading principles of a sound morality. Wherever the Sabbath is observed, you behold a nation assembling one day in seven, to become acquainted with the best moral principles, and hear the best moral precepts. And where this is the case, in defiance of the love of sin, the authority of moral virtue must be acknowledged, and the influence of the Sabbath must be felt. We may not at once perceive the effects which the recurrence of this day has upon human society. “Like most moral causes, it operates slowly but surely,” but wherever it comes, it gradually weakens the power and breaks the yoke of profligacy and sin. And here let it be remarked, in perfect accordance with these suggestions will be found the history of individuals and associations of men. No villain regards the Sabbath. No vicious family regards the Sabbath. No worthless and immoral community regards the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a barrier which must be broken down, before men can become giants in iniquity. Lord Chief Justice Hale of England remarks, “that of all

the persons who were convicted of capital crimes, while he was upon the bench, he found a few only, who would not confess, on inquiry, that they began their career of wickedness, by a neglect of the duties of the Sabbath, and vicious conduct on that day." I should like to see an authentic and correct history of all the prisons in the land; and unless I am much deceived, such a statement would not present an instance of an individual who had not broken over the restraints of the Sabbath before he was abandoned to crime, and who could not mark the profanations of that day as forming an advanced stage in his downward career. You may enact laws for the prevention of crime; you may frame them with judgment, and execute them with promptness and impartiality; but the secret and silent influence of the Sabbath is a greater preventive of crimes, and does of itself "constitute a stronger shield to the vital interests of a community, than any code of penal statutes that ever was enacted." Sound morality has no such foundation as the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the key-stone of the Temple of Virtue, which, however it may be defaced, will survive many a rude shock, and retain much of its pristine magnificence, as long as its foundation remains firm.

As a general remark, I would say, THE SABBATH IS A DISTINGUISHED MEANS OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY. The God of heaven has annexed very great and precious promises to the sacred observance of this day, involving emphatically "the life that now is, as well as that which is to come." He told his ancient people, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Again he says, "If ye will dili-

gently hearken unto me, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day to do no work therein ; there shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever." You will not often find a notorious Sabbath-breaker a permanently prosperous man ; or a Sabbath-breaking community, a prosperous and happy community. "Them that honour me," saith God, "I will honour." The learned and devout jurist, whose name we just now mentioned, remarks, respecting himself, "I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing the duty of this day, hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time ; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me. And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments ; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of observing this day ; and this," he adds, "I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."

It is obvious that temporal prosperity would be the natural result of the observance of the Sabbath, if it secured nothing more than the blessings to which we have already referred. But there are other particulars in which the tendencies of this day exert a most salutary influence on human society. The "provision which this holy day furnishes of a season of rest to labouring animals," the "rest and refreshment secured to mankind"—the "neatness and cleanliness which it promotes, especially among the lower classes of men"—the "softness and civility of manners" which it diffuses throughout a community—the "tendency of the Sabbath to abase our pride and remove our native ruggedness of

disposition"—the self respect and elevation of character to which it so successfully invites those who observe it with decency : all these evince that the " Sabbath was made for man," and is instrumentally the great dispenser of prosperity and happiness.

In addition to these advantages, the influence the Sabbath exerts on social order and civil liberty is by no means of little importance. It may be questioned, whether a nation of slaves was ever found where the institutions of the Sabbath have been enjoyed in their purity. It is impossible a people can be " hoodwinked and misruled either by kings, princes, or priests," where the Sabbath proclaims its legitimate immunities, or insists on its felicitous obligations. The yoke of tyranny and superstition cannot bear the influence of the Sabbath. Let a nation be composed of men who sacredly revere the Sabbath, and they are no longer the fit subjects of unlawful authority, or irresistible usurpation. And what, think you, would become of the liberties of a nation, where all its inhabitants were Sabbath-breakers? How long would freedom survive the extermination of the Sabbath?

Nor is the influence of the Sabbath to be disregarded as it respects the means of a comfortable subsistence. It would be well if men who are interested to elevate the condition of the poor, and lessen the sources, and diminish the amount of human poverty and wretchedness, would soberly think of the advantages of the Sabbath, as one of the most efficient expedients for the prevention of pauperism. It would be no useless information, if a statistic account could be furnished of the commerce, agriculture, manufactures, arts, tranquillity, affluence and elevation of particular communities which have been abandoned to a general profanation of the Sabbath, and contrasted with a similar view of communities in which this holy day has been observed with the reverence due to its divine authority. We have no question what the result of the contrast would be. To men and communities who profane the Sabbath.

to say nothing of the cognate vices of this profanation, and the waste of property in maintaining them, this day is not only the most expensive of all the seven, but not unfrequently, of itself consumes the earnings of the six days toil. Upon the poorer class of the community especially, the observance of the Sabbath will be found to have an incalculable influence in rescuing them from want, and elevating them to the decencies of a comfortable subsistence. A poor man, an impoverished community, can badly afford to indulge in the neglect of the Sabbath. Nor is what I say theory merely. You cannot find the abject poor among those who pay a serious and reverential regard to the Sabbath. The most filthy, starved, and wretched of the human family, will be found among those who habitually and always disregard the Sabbath. The host of mendicants that infest the community, especially in our large towns, will be found to issue from cellars and garrets that have never been consecrated to the observance of the Lord's day. Let a man look round upon the world with the eye of a philanthropic economist merely, and he will see abundant evidence, that the Sabbath was instituted in kindness to man, and that a sacred and strict observance of it tends directly to promote the temporal prosperity of mankind.

But there is another consideration of still weightier import; and though I do not in these pages address you from the pulpit, it is one which I may not suppress: the Sabbath IS THE GREAT MEANS OF PERPETUATING IN THE EARTH THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUE RELIGION? Very few men, if any, are universal skeptics. All nations have some impressions of a religious sort, be they ever so erroneous. The moral and intellectual constitution of men in this matter, is very clearly disclosed in the number and diversity of religions which find a place on the earth. To limit the prodigious increase of errors on a subject so interesting to mankind, God early gave them the Sabbath as the means of perpetuating the true religion. Hence this day, wherever

it has been duly observed, has been the great preservative against polytheism and idolatry. God said to the Israelites, "Surely my Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is *a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord.*" The events which the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian Sabbath commemorate, are, the original creation, the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; events which have ever been considered characteristic of the true religion. If these three events can be established, the religion founded on them must be acknowledged to be of divine origin. Now the observance of the Sabbath transmits these events down to the successive generations of men, as matters of uncontrovertible reality; so that the Sabbath is a "sign" between God and man, recurring every week, and a sign of such singular significance, that the religion of which these events constitute so prominent a part, must be the true religion. You have seen coins, and pillars, and monuments, and have observed holidays, which were unequivocal demonstrations of the events they were designed to commemorate. Of the same general nature is the Sabbath. It is a public observance of matters of fact, the reality of which could be easily ascertained, which was got up from the period in which the facts themselves took place, and as such, has come down through successive centuries to the present hour. We should have known nothing of the Sabbath, but for the events themselves which this day commemorates. When we speak of the Sabbath, we at once recur to the reasons of its institution. When our children witness the observance of this day, and inquire why one day in seven is set apart from a secular to a religious purpose, we are at once led to a disclosure of the events of which this day is the memorial; and when their children, and their children's children, find themselves the possessors of such an observance, they will also be possessed of the events which the observance commemorates, and

in these, possess an epitome of the evidences in favour of the true religion.

Wherever the Sabbath exists therefore, and is observed, there exists the knowledge of the one God, and the one Mediator. To this institution it is, in a great measure, owing, that the knowledge of the true religion has been, and is still, preserved in the world. If you find a spot so abandoned as to be a stranger to the Sabbath, there, you may rest assured, is no knowledge of the true God. France, in the age of her great moral, as well as political revolution, abolished the Sabbath, and with it abolished her religion, declared that there was no God but reason, and no hereafter except the grave. The same result will follow the same premises, wherever the experiment shall be made. The nation that disowns the Sabbath, is, necessarily, a nation of infidels and atheists. You may look where you will, either among individuals, families, or communities, and if the Sabbath is a desolation, there you will find a gradual and certain decay from true religion to infidelity and paganism. Let the Sabbath be forgotten for half a century in our own favoured land, and in vain might you look for a single Christian temple throughout this western hemisphere. There are towns and villages on this continent, and even within our own commonwealth, where, for half a century, the Sabbath has been neglected and despised; and, if you will visit them, you will see that you have no necessity of going to India, or the Southern ocean, to find immortal beings who are ignorant of their immortality, and men who must soon appear before God in judgment, who have seldom heard of God and his Christ. There is just as much importance, therefore, attached to the observance of the Sabbath, as there is to the preservation of the true religion among men.

Allied to this thought, I may add, the Sabbath is THE GREAT MEANS OF HOLINESS AND ETERNAL LIFE. Man is by nature dead in sin, and under the curse of God's righteous

law. Such he must remain, unless transformed by the Spirit of God in all the moral character of his soul, and justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The great means of this moral transformation is found in the institutions of the holy Sabbath. Not only does this day perpetuate the knowledge of the true religion on the earth, but secures the existence of vital religion in the hearts of men. The various means of grace, so abundantly blessed of God, are all by his own appointment brought into action on this holy day. But for the Sabbath, they would not be once thought of on other days; but for the Sabbath, they would soon be erased from the recollections of men, and blotted out from the record of human affairs. Is the soul enlightened, convinced of sin, humbled, renewed, invigorated, comforted, assisted in its struggles with this conflicting world, brought forward on its spiritual pilgrimage, sanctified, prepared to triumph over death and the grave, made meet for heaven, clothed as an angel of light, and presented before the throne of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? All this light, and purity, and consolation, and honour, and glory, she owes instrumentally to the Sabbath. Is this the happy allotment of the Church of God collectively? Are such the possessions of the nations of the saved, composed as they are of a great multitude which no man can number, from every kindred, and tongue, and people? With one voice must they ascribe this inestimable inheritance to the influence of the Sabbath. Blot out the Sabbath, and you blot out the last beam of hope from the troubled and desponding heart. Blot out the Sabbath, and no longer will the salutary lessons of the Bible lead ungodly men to repentance and salvation. No longer will the silver clarion of the gospel proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of death's prison doors to those that are bound. No longer will the voice of supplication ascend from this ruined world, to draw from heaven the blessing now so munificently imparted by

the hearer of prayer. No longer will the Spirit of truth and grace dwell among men, to dissipate their darkness and communicate that influence which makes the desert like Eden, and the wilderness like the garden of the Lord. No longer will the temples of the Most High allure the heavy laden sinner to the mercy-seat. No longer will the sacred thanksgivings of the church on earth, intermingling with the sweeter and purer harmony of the church in heaven, ascend as a sweet-smelling savour before the God of the spirits of all flesh. No longer will ordinances quicken—or the soul be comforted—or grace be triumphant—or the unnumbered heirs of sin and perdition be conducted in the path that terminates at God's right hand. No; blot out the Sabbath, and darkness will cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Sin will reign, Satan will walk through the earth in all the frenzy of his long-wished-for usurpation, and death and hell will follow in his train. Blot out the Sabbath, and in one mighty crowd of pilgrims, this world's population would march quietly on to the gulf of remediless ruin.

Such, fellow-citizens, are the views which I venture to suggest to you relative to the importance of the Christian Sabbath. With men of high honour and sound patriotism may I be allowed to hope they will have their influence? I wish it were in my power to give them the force and allurements which the intrinsic excellence of my theme demands. As a man of the world merely, I venerate the Sabbath. I would not be the agent in the destruction of this benevolent institution, for all that earth can give. Indeed, this world would have very little to bestow, when all that is illuminating and pure, elevating and noble, serene and holy, have become exiled from among men, as they must be with the extermination of this sacred day. That man has already lived too long, who has survived the extinction of the Sabbath. But why should I speak as an inhabitant of this world merely? Immortal existence it-

self would be a curse, if extended beyond the blessings of the Sabbath. No, I would not be the witness of its extinction, I would not stand by and hear the dying groans of this day of mercy, for all the universe can give. Rather would I yield my immortality, than hear the knell that tolls the departure of this Great Day.

But I must return : there is a thought which it was my purpose to submit to your consideration before I close. It is this : *Does not the importance of the Sabbath, in a civil view, invest it with an undeniable claim to the protection of public law ?* The laws of all Christian States have, to a greater or less extent, given their authority and protection to the Sabbath. Men of wisdom, honour, and virtue, have ever felt that it ought to be among the earliest objects of their solicitude to perpetuate the blessings of this holy day. And does not the importance of the Sabbath plead irresistibly for this paternal interposition ? Is the Sabbath the great means of perpetuating in the earth the knowledge of the true religion ? Is it the great means of intellectual advancement ? Does it lie at the foundation of all sound morality ? Is it not less a distinguished means of temporal prosperity, than of holiness and eternal life ? Then is there no institution around which a more impenetrable barrier of wholesome restrictions ought to be erected. The Sabbath is the noblest and firmest pillar of a well-regulated society. It is the corner-stone of that noble edifice of morals, liberty, and public weal, which is the pride and exultation of every prosperous community. If our political institutions cannot be preserved unless the laws and usages of the land are formed on the basis of sound morality ; if morality cannot be maintained without the active impression of religious principle ; and if neither can exist long where the Sabbath exerts none of its heaven-born influence ; then is it not the truest policy of a State to enforce the observance of this day ? It is impossible human laws should bind men to be religious ; and nothing would be more preposterous than to

attempt it. You may bribe them to be hypocrites, but you cannot force them to be at heart the servants of God. But it is surely no impossible thing to suppress the open and intrepid violations of the Sabbath. I hear you say, It would be an infringement of the rights of conscience and personal liberty ! But do the rights of conscience and personal liberty consist in allowing every man to do as he pleases, irrespective what is right in itself and the best good of the State ? As well might you affirm it to be an infringement of the rights of conscience and personal liberty to impose a legal restraint upon fraud and forgery. If you reply, Crimes of this sort are a violation of the divine law, and at war with the best interests of the community ; I rejoin, so is the violation of the Lord's day. Nay more, I seriously doubt whether the violation of the Sabbath is not vastly more injurious to the community, than any act of fraud which you can mention. I recollect that not long since, the present king of Great Britain, on his return from a tour to Scotland, passed from Gravesend to London on the Sabbath ; and I am confident that this single violation of that sacred day—desolating, as it did, to a considerable degree, the neighbouring churches—letting loose, as it did, the crowded population of London—and procuring, as it did, an aggregate of immorality which is not the lot of common scenes to witness—was far more injurious to the community, than though he had forged a note upon the Bank of England. The ground on which the Sabbath claims the protection of human laws is simply the ground on which any other institution claims that protection ; and that is, it is an ordinance of God, and indispensable to the well-being of the State. "There is not," says a sensible anonymous writer, "a single position in political economy, which can be more firmly established in the mind of every candid man, than that the strict and universal observance of the Sabbath is, in the highest degree, conducive to the public prosperity. On no subject whatever, is the language of experience more explicit and decisive."

Our allotment as a community is not that there are wanting wise and wholesome laws for the protection of the Sabbath, but that they are not carried into execution. I am not insensible of the difficulty of this service; nor have I any doubt that it exists to a degree beyond what is generally conceived. And for myself, I gratefully express my obligations to the magistracy of our metropolis, for their fidelity in suppressing the profanations of the Sabbath, especially during the hours of divine worship. Still, I must express my conviction, that as our civil authorities have done much to prevent this evil, so *they may do more*. God grant we may not be left to learn too late, that the Sabbath is one of the selectest gifts of heaven to men. When like other nations and other communities, we have seen that virtue and happiness, and those social and civil privileges, which are secured by this sacred institution, swept away; then shall we be taught that the Sabbath is the palladium of the dearest rights of man, and that the best interests of the community can no longer be consulted with enforcing its observance.

There is a single inquiry more, and I will lay down my pen. Does not the importance of the Sabbath bring home *the obligation to the bosom of every patriot to support its authority both by his example and influence?* Nor can I too forcibly urge this demand on myself and my fellow-citizens. If there were no other considerations than those of private interest, I would not cease to urge the sacred observance of this day. No man, no community, ever lost any thing by keeping the Sabbath-day holy. God will bless the Sabbath to those who observe it, and he will curse all other time to those who profane it. The profanation of this day is too bold and sacrilegious an invasion of God's property, not to be followed with the malediction of the Great Proprietor of time and Creator of men. Here fidelity compels me to say, and I do it with reluctance, that there are not wanting in our city painful demonstrations of too gene-

tal a disregard to the Sabbath. Though by no means so deeply corrupted as other and older communities, our flourishing metropolis is rapidly advancing toward that unblushing profanation of the Lord's day, which is the reproach, and unless repented of, must be the ruin of the nations that inhabit the other hemisphere. There are multitudes of men in the midst of us, who are, or mean to be, the abettors of social order, and who would be disappointed if they were not considered the supporters of sound morality, who would well nigh feel guilty of a profanation of this holy day, if they did not convert it into a day of good neighbourhood and social enjoyment. Others there are, who would revolt from the detail of secular labour on this day, but who have no misgivings of heart at an occasional journey upon business, or jaunt of pleasure. Others would not even revolt at this. How is a sober man disgusted with the dissipation of pleasure gardens, the rudeness of tippling houses, the indecencies of fruit shops, as he walks the streets of our city on the Sabbath. And is there no reason to question both the piety and the policy of that *authorized* violation of the Lord's day, which is so prominent in our fish-markets? On this sacred day too, our butchers purchase and slay the very beasts, to which he, whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills, has guaranteed one day of undisturbed repose. On this day, the adjacent fields and streams swarm with men, women, and children, who toil and labour to collect the fruits of the earth for your consumption and mine. And what shall I say of that most gross violation of the Sabbath, which exists within the walls of some of our printing offices? Have the proprietors of some of our daily papers seriously considered the baleful tendencies of their perseverance in this needless and multi-form iniquity? How pitiable is it to hear men of sense palliate and justify enormities like these? Is there not enough, fellow-citizens, in the word of the living God, to lead you to appreciate such vindications, and to trace them

to their proper source? Who has authorized any man, or set of men, to trample on a divine institution, for the sake of his own convenience? Who has relaxed the obligations of eternal, immutable righteousness, for the accommodation of men who serve mammon rather than God? I should like to see all the apologies for violating the Sabbath condensed, and enforced with all the ability which man can give them, and I will pledge myself, in a single sentence, to refute them all. And to anticipate a redemption of the pledge, I will here rehearse the sentence, once indeed rehearsed with memorable solemnity—**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY!**

Allow me, fellow-citizens, affectionately to invite you to a perpetual abjuration of all such violations of this holy day. If you would not share in the desolations of older and more degenerate States, beware how you symbolize with their profanation of the Sabbath! O it is enough to sicken one's heart, to survey the immoralities that are fostered by the neglect and abuse of this day in some of the States even of Modern Europe. If you are not strangers to the ardour and enthusiasm which so justly beats high in the breast of American citizens; if you have thought the liberty, laws, and political institutions of this happy land, are worth preserving; I entreat you, guard, with a watchful eye, a reproachless example, and commanding influence, this first of all her moral institutions. Let it be your own, and the practice of all around you, whenever this day commences, to suspend all secular business. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do *any work*, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, or thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." This is the divine command,—a command that occupies one-tenth part of the moral law, that was written by God's own finger on tables of stone, and, by his own Almighty voice,

sounded out from Sinai, that it might pour its obligations upon every ear, through every age of time. Beware, also, how you make his day, a day of pleasure and amusement. The common sense of every man must teach him that the Sabbath was instituted for a higher purpose. There is no more insidious, and, perhaps, no more fatal profanation of the day than this, though it may have found many a patron from Christian names. To regard the day simply as a pleasant relaxation from the severity of toil, and a temperate indulgence in whatever tends to cheer the fatigue, and refresh the languor of unabated diligence through the week ; these are the very liberties with the Sabbath which, though commenced with a trembling conscience, and indulged by fearful gradations, in the result never fail to thrust out all the solemnity of its duties, and prevent all the preciousness of its blessings. This is that "leaven of impiety, which, the more it ferments and is diffused, does the more corrupt and demoralize the whole mass of civil society ;" this is that drop of poison which contaminates and polutes the very fountains of grace and mercy, to which this world owes so much of its purity and enjoyment.

On the behalf of this holy day, therefore, and in the name of the God of heaven, I ask your example and your influence, fellow-citizens, to redeem this day from the invasions of a profanation that must be attended with consequences affecting serious. To you who are magistrates, and invested with civil authority, permit me respectfully to say—The ordinance of God and the voice of a free people have elevated you to posts of dignity and power, that you may be the sentinels of the public virtue. To you their eyes are directed to maintain the sacredness and diffuse the blessings of the holy Sabbath. The voice of the King of kings to you is, *Remember the Sabbath day!* In your personal and official capacity never lose sight of its appointment and design. If, as our civil fathers, you would see your children rise up and call you blessed—if you would embalm your names

in the remembrance of an elevated people, and transmit them with many a grateful sentiment to a distant futurity; be entreated to become the exemplary and fearless guardians of the Christian Sabbath. To you who are parents, allow me to say—On you also devolves the sacred charge of perpetuating and extending the divine influence of this holy day. Let your children be instructed in the obligations of the Sabbath, and governed to a conformity with its reasonable requisitions in early life. Even should the men of the existing generation become demoralized, there is a redeeming influence lodged within the bosom of every family, that may form a generation of another spirit, and preserve the city from increasing corruption. On you who are teachers, rests the same sacred responsibility. Let your schools be nurseries of morality and piety, as well as of learning. To you, the community have a right to look for the influence of a moral restraint in qualifying the youth of our city for useful members of civil society. And may I venture a word to the individuals in private life, whom the God of heaven has destined to influence over their fellow-men? Interpose that influence, fellow-citizens, in behalf of the sacred Sabbath. Let it be one of the great principles of your conduct, wherever and whatever you may be, to uphold the authority and plead the cause of this holy institution. To the youth, particularly, permit me to say—let nothing tempt you to profane the Sabbath. No one external observance will exert a more powerful influence on your moral character than a strict regard to the Lord's day. You cannot become abandoned while you revere the Sabbath. You cannot become useless members of civil society so long as you regard the Sabbath. You cannot put yourselves beyond the reach of hope and heaven so long as you sanctify the Sabbath.